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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 003207

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DEPT FOR AF, AF/W, AF/RA  
EUCOM FOR DCINC AND POLAD LADESMA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/14/2011  
TAGS: [PREL](#), [NI](#), [ECOWAS](#), [UN](#)  
SUBJECT: ECOWAS: KOUYATE'S FUTURE

REF: USUN 3004

(U) Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter; Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. This is an action request. Please see para 5.

[1](#)2. (C) During a December 7 meeting (septel), ECOWAS Executive Secretary Kouyate told Ambassador Jeter that he would not

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seek a one-year extension as Executive Secretary. Kouyate thought it was time to go and did not want to stand in the way of other candidates, even though President Wade, the next heir apparent of ECOWAS, had expressed hope that Kouyate would stay.

[1](#)3. (C) Kouyate said that The Gambia and Ghana had candidates, and that tiny Benin had several, including the Minister of Finance and Foreign Minister. Agreeing that it was absolutely essential that an able person replace him, Kouyate clearly indicated a preference by describing the Ghanaian candidate Mohammed Chambas as a "skilled diplomat."

[1](#)4. (C) Discussing his own future, Kouyate said he had spoken to Kofi Annan about a UN position. He asked that the United States put in a good word for him with the UN Secretary General.

[1](#)5. (C) COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST: After reading reftel, we could think of no one better suited for the position of UN Special Representative for West Africa. The well-respected Kouyate knows both the UN system and West Africa. He is highly regarded by sub-regional leaders, and consistently demonstrates a willingness to work with the U.S. We also note that the Special Representative office will be based in Dakar, likely to be the home of the next ECOWAS Chairman. Kouyate's presence in Dakar in a UN capacity could enhance coordination between the UN and ECOWAS, which, on balance, would benefit USG interests in West Africa. END COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST.  
Jeter